

**Preliminary Amendment of U.S. National Stage for International Application
PCT/EP2003/009809 filed September 4, 2003**

--DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION--

At page 15, between lines 1 and 2 thereof, please add the following new paragraph:

--What is claimed is:--.

On a separate, new page 17, please add the following new section heading and paragraph containing an Abstract of the Disclosure:

--ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

Methods for protecting, modulating and/or improving the dermal/epidermal junctions of the skin, scalp and/or mucous membranes are described wherein a preparation comprising at least one substance which effects a modulation of one or more dermal/epidermal junction components selected from the group consisting of plectin/HD1, entactin/nidogen, percalan and combinations thereof, is applied to the skin, scalp, and/or mucous membrane. Plant extracts and other compounds useful in such methods and cosmetic preparations containing such substances are also described.--